

The monthly FEMA *Children & Disasters Newsletter* is a resource for youth preparedness practitioners, educators, parents, children, and teens. It shares timely research, examples of successful youth preparedness programs, safety tips, and resources related to youth preparedness. To subscribe to the *Children & Disasters Newsletter*, please visit www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness.

CHILDREN & DISASTERS NEWSLETTER



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Welcome to the August issue of the *Children and Disasters Newsletter*! In this month's edition, we recap the 2014 Youth Preparedness Council Summit and connect you with several resources for parents and youth preparedness practitioners. We share Ready New York's new guides for young and middle school-age children. We present the National Preparedness Community, which connects individuals throughout the country who are interested in preparedness—and features a special Community of Practice for Educators, Parents, and Youth. We highlight the FBI Child ID App, which can assist when a child goes missing. We also feature several resources for choking prevention and response. Finally, a quick overview of the legacy projects the Youth Preparedness Council members proposed at their annual Summit illustrates the wide variety of ways that the message of youth preparedness can be shared.

APPLY FOR FEMA CORPS BY SEPTEMBER 1

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) is now accepting [applications](#) for the Winter 2015 FEMA Corps class. The deadline to apply is October 1, but individuals who submit an application by September 1 will be eligible to pick their campus for the first time ever.

FEMA Corps is a 1,600-member service corps devoted exclusively to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery that was created through a partnership between FEMA and AmeriCorps NCCC.

FEMA Corps is designed for individuals between the ages of 18-24 who are interested in emergency management and passionate about disaster relief. FEMA Corps members serve with a team for 10 months and travel the country working directly with FEMA on emergency management related projects. Teams have responded to every major U.S. disaster since the program's creation in 2012.

In addition to the benefits of engaging directly in emergency management projects and working with FEMA staff, FEMA Corps members also receive a living stipend, and their housing, food, and transportation costs are covered during their 10 months of service. Members who successfully complete their term of service also receive an education award that can be used to pay for school costs or to pay off qualified student loans.

For more information about FEMA Corps, please visit: www.nationalservice.gov/femacorps.

2014 YOUTH PREPAREDNESS COUNCIL CONVENES IN DC



On July 22 and 23, the new and returning members of the [FEMA Youth Preparedness Council](#) came together in Washington, DC for the third annual Youth Preparedness Council Summit. Accompanied by chaperones, the Council members came to learn from youth preparedness partners, share their opinions and ideas with those partners, and get to know one another and the FEMA Community Preparedness Officers who serve as their mentors.

The first day of the Summit was focused on learning and sharing, and included sessions with key partners from FEMA and other organizations. The day began with welcomes from Richard Reed, Senior Vice President at the American Red Cross and Kathleen Fox, Acting Assistant Administrator of the FEMA National Preparedness Directorate. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate then stopped by to spend some time with the Council members. During the two-way dialogue, he emphasized the importance of storytelling in getting young people interested in preparedness.

Council members learned about leveraging social media during a session run by FEMA Public Affairs, and about making their legacy projects inclusive of the whole community during a session from the [FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination](#). They also learned about the important work the [American Red Cross](#) is doing with regards to youth preparedness, and Red Cross resources that they can use to further their own work. A moderated session with FEMA representatives provided the opportunity for Council members to share their opinions, ideas, and experiences related to engaging youth in community preparedness. A FEMA Corps team introduced Council members to the [FEMA Corps program](#) and helped the teens consider ways to stay involved with preparedness after their one- or two-year terms on the Council.

The second day of the Summit provided Council members with the opportunity to start working on their legacy projects. Council members learned about the tools and resources available from FEMA

that can support their work on the Council, and did an extensive brainstorm of their legacy projects. After a presentation with tips and techniques for public speaking, each member had the opportunity to practice with a mock interview. Strong relationships among the Council members were also established during a field trip to the White House and a group dinner.

The Summit provided an excellent kick-off to this year's Council term, and set the foundation for the great work the Council members are going to do this year. Learn more about the FEMA Youth Preparedness Council, and follow along with their progress throughout the year, on the [Youth Preparedness Council website](#).

READY NEW YORK UNVEILS NEW RESOURCES FOR KIDS

The [New York City Office of Emergency Management](#) encourages New Yorkers to get prepared through the [Ready New York](#) campaign, and the campaign includes guides that are tailored specifically to children. They have recently rolled out several new resources—a coloring book for younger children and “Choose Your Own Path”-style books for middle school students!

The “Be Ready, Be Safe” coloring book can be found on the [Ready New York: Kids website](#). Ready New York also provides four adventure books in which readers can choose the actions of the main character and read through multiple storylines in each book. Each of these stories describes a different disaster: a water main break, a blizzard, a heat wave, and a hurricane. The books can be found on the [Ready New York: Choose Your Own Path to Preparedness website](#). That website also includes resources for parents and teachers with activities for each month of the year.

KIDS SAVING KIDS: CHOKING AWARENESS

Youth preparedness information can come from a range of places, some of them unexpected. Countless young people have been trained in, and even used, the Heimlich maneuver. Often this skill is learned from parents or training programs. However, in the past three years, at least four such children—[Elspeth “Beanie” Mar \(6\)](#), [William Ruhno \(7\)](#), [Hannah Underwood \(8\)](#), and [Malik Gipson \(8\)](#)—saved a friend or sibling and learned these life-saving skills from television shows!

According to the [New York State Department of Health](#), a child in the U.S. dies every five days from choking on food. The number of children that are taken to the emergency room for the same reason is over 100 times higher. The [Mayo Clinic provides information about how to respond when someone is choking](#). The [New York State Department of Health](#) and [Safe Kids Worldwide™](#) also provide information about choking hazards and choking prevention tips.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY CONNECTS PREPAREDNESS ADVOCATES

The [National Preparedness Community](#) is an online forum for individuals throughout the country who are interested in preparedness. Whether connecting by region or by area of interest, participants can engage with one another to share resources and best practices. Of particular relevance to individuals interested in youth preparedness, there is an [Educators, Parents, and Youth Community of Practice](#).

Community participants can start or respond to discussions, pose questions, and post or search for preparedness-related events throughout the country. If you are interested in joining the National Preparedness Community, please do the following:

1. Visit <http://www.community.fema.gov/> and select the “National Preparedness Community” icon at the top left.
2. Click the “Join the National Preparedness Community” box at the top right.
3. Answer the profile questions.
4. Review and accept the “Terms and Conditions.”
5. Click “Register.”

From the main page, you can follow the link to “Preparedness Discussions,” and one of the forums is “Introduce Yourself.” You are encouraged to let the community know who you are! You can also navigate to “Regional Groups” and “Communities of Practice,” where you can join groups or review discussions of interest to you. Anyone can read the discussions, but you must be registered in order to post. If you choose to join a regional group or community of practice, you can also introduce yourself there.

By registering for specific groups, you can receive email updates about each group, and you can select how often you want to receive those updates. By clicking “My Profile” then “My Groups,” you can disable notifications or select whether you prefer immediate updates or digest summaries. That way, you can stay up to date and in touch without having to log in to check the site manually. Join the community and spread the word about your work in preparedness!

CHILD ID APP HELPS PARENTS PREPARE

When a child disappears—whether as a result of a disaster or by being kidnapped, getting lost, or running away—time is of the essence in search and rescue. However, panicked parents or guardians may have trouble supplying the necessary information to those who are conducting the search. The FBI Child ID App provides a free and convenient way of storing critical information, including photos of your child. If the need arises, you won’t have to spend precious time remembering or collecting this information.

In addition to capturing identifying information and characteristics, the app provides tips for keeping kids safe. The app also provides guidance for what steps adults can take during the first 24 and 48 hours after a child’s disappearance. For concerned parents or guardians, having these suggestions at their fingertips can help them to carry out appropriate actions more quickly. In the event of an emergency, the app can be used to communicate directly with the authorities, including local 911 and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The child’s information can also be sent directly from the app.

The app is available for both [iPhones](#) and [Android phones](#). The FBI website also provides the [content of the app in PDF format](#), so individuals without the app can still benefit from the tips and resources.

LEGACY PROJECT IDEAS HIGHLIGHT THE POTENTIAL REACH OF YOUTH PREPAREDNESS

The annual FEMA Youth Preparedness Council Summit provides an opportunity for Council members

to work collaboratively with their Community Preparedness Officers on starting to develop legacy projects. Each Council member is required to complete at least one legacy project during his or her term on the Council, but they have free rein to define that project. At the end of the Summit, Council members reported out on the projects that they have tentatively decided to pursue, though of course they can change course later.

The breadth of ideas that the Council members presented serves to emphasize the variety of ways in which preparedness information can be presented to youth or incorporated into other activities. Anyone looking for new ways to share youth preparedness information may want to consider the following proposed projects:

- **Programs:** creating and expanding Teen and Campus [Community Emergency Response Teams \(CERTs\)](#); continuing a [READY](#) club; starting a local Youth [Fire Corps](#); creating statewide or region-wide Youth Preparedness Councils
- **Partnerships:** implementing the American Red Cross' [Pillowcase Project](#); collecting supplies to help participants start their emergency kits, in coordination with a local implementation of the Pillowcase Project
- **Events:** conducting a preparedness-focused video competition; developing a preparedness exhibit and activities for a children's museum; conducting a mass casualty training or drill; leading a preparedness training session
- **Outreach:** developing public service announcements (PSAs); using youth preparedness as a theme for an art project; creating an app to promote disaster preparedness; coordinating a national competition to design a preparedness mascot

The Council members have come up with an impressive range of ideas, and hopefully some of them inspire others to get involved with youth preparedness in unique ways!

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Disclaimer: The reader recognizes that the federal government provides links and informational data on various disaster preparedness resources and events and does not endorse any non-federal events, entities, organizations, services or products. Please let us know about other events and services related to youth preparedness that could be included in future newsletters by contacting FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov.

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